

justify suspicion of extravagance. Moreover, this practice of rebating is one means by which trusts are created and the cost of living made high. While it is entirely wrong in most cases to define the high cost of living as did Mr. Hill, yet he seems to have been accurate enough as far as the railroads are concerned. The Interstate Commerce Commission should dismiss their appeal with the advice to consider well the wisdom of James J. Hill.



Another unreasonable argument is the one that general prosperity awaits the increase in freight rates. If that be true, then a five per cent increase is much too small. It ought to be unlimited. The argument is not only unreasonable but imprudent. It is needless to say that the increase will not bring prosperity except to certain big interests. If prosperity should happen to come it will be in spite of the increase. But if, which is more probable, it does not come, then the falsity of the plea will be evident, and resulting public indignation may cost the roads dearly.



If raising of railroad rates is what brings prosperity then there is another reason why railroads should not be privately controlled. The source of general prosperity should be in public hands. Otherwise railroad magnates must have it in their power to shut off prosperity at any time, as well as to bring it. The prosperity claim is dangerous as well as false and foolish.

S. D.



Congressman Bailey's Amendment.

An amendment to the Alaska government railway bill which ought to be promptly adopted was offered by Congressman Warren Worth Bailey of Pennsylvania on January 30. The amendment provides for redeeming the bonds issued to build the railway by the creation of a fund "into which shall be paid the proceeds of an annual tax on the value of land in Alaska, both publicly and privately owned, which shall be benefited by the construction and the operation of the railroad or railroads herein authorized." It further says that "the value of all improvements in or on the land being hereby specifically exempted from taxation as far as the Alaska railway fund is concerned."



Congressman Bailey's proposition is exactly in line with ex-President Roosevelt's suggestion of an Alaskan policy in his "Confession of Faith." It is sound statesmanship. It eliminates from the

bill its one objectionable feature by which sale of government land is authorized. Concerning this Mr. Bailey says:

If the railroads are to prove a benefit rather than a mistake, their mere building will create values equal to if not far greater than their cost. In the reclamation of arid lands and in the drainage of swamps we have applied a principle which seems to me quite as applicable to the development of Alaska. What I intend proposing to do is not dissimilar from what we do when we bring water to a rainless region; it is not dissimilar from what we do when we cut ditches and dig canals for the drainage of swamps. We have never—or, at least, we have not often—asked the people at large to bear the cost of such improvements. Instead, we almost invariably have said that those who derived the benefits should pay the cost. We have subjected the lands redeemed to a special assessment, this assessment being in proportion to benefits. In other words, we made one hand wash the other, and only those were required to contribute who derived a pecuniary advantage.



Just what the result will be of failure to adopt Mr. Bailey's suggestion is well shown in his address. It would be the same as has occurred in the rest of the United States, where much valuable land is withheld from use, much that is in use is not put to its best use, and where not half of the land of the country is contributing to the sum of production. It is as tightly locked against labor and enterprise as the land of Alaska under a stupid policy which confesses its impotency to deal with a great problem—the problem of opening opportunity without inviting monopoly.



Congressmen and Senators should be urged by their constituents to support Mr. Bailey's amendment. Its adoption will not only make the proposed railroad an unmixed blessing to Alaska, but will prove the practicability of applying the policy of government ownership to the rest of the United States.

S. D.



Why Trusts Are Flourishing.

Senator Cummins of Iowa called attention in the Senate on January 29 to the rise in price of trust stocks while "trust-busting" operations are under way. The rise is perfectly natural. Anything which assures to trusts a longer lease of predatory power must necessarily have a favorable effect on the value of their stocks. Since none of the "trust-busting" plans involve removal of underlying privileges from trusts, investors in trust stocks are quite justified in feeling confidence in

continuance of power to exact from consumers all that the traffic will bear. It is due Senator Cummins to say that he is the only member of the Senate who has made a serious attempt, during the life of the present Congress, to strike at trust privileges. He offered an amendment to the Underwood bill, while pending, to place all trust products on the free list. The adoption of that amendment would have destroyed all tariff privileges, at least. But it was voted down by a combination of Democrats and standpat Republicans. Now nothing more serious against the trusts is in prospect than a lot of suits under the Sherman law and enactment of additional laws to regulate, to prohibit, to restrict and to punish. Until the underlying privileges are seriously attacked, trusts will continue to flourish.

S. D.



Safety at Sea.

Must the world have another marine disaster, before Congress yields to the obvious? Press dispatches quote Mr. Webb Balsinger, Vice-President of the Carnegie Steel Company, as saying that on a recent trip of the *Lusitania*, when a fishing crew was to be rescued, "it took at least forty-five minutes to lower a boat from the deck, and fully half an hour more before it was thoroughly detached from the falls." Such an incident emphasizes the contention of Andrew Furuseth in the London Safety-at-sea conference that there should not only be life boats for all on board, but that each life boat should be manned by at least two able seamen—that is, two fully qualified sailors—who understand the language of the officers. Because the committee on life boats, of which Andrew Furuseth was a member, refused to accept this minimum, and on the contrary persisted in reporting "two boatmen who understand the language of an interpreter," he resigned. The report of the committee allows, and was intended to allow the employment of Lascars and Chinese crews under the command of European officers, whose commands must be transmitted through interpreters.



It is needless to speculate upon the safety of the passengers on such a manned ship in the presence of disaster. And even when the provisions are applied to the trans-Atlantic liners that have so grudgingly increased the number of life boats, but insist upon manning them with porters, cooks, stewards, and bell-boys, the consequences may be no less serious. The life boat provisions of the LaFollette Seamen's bill, which has already passed

the Senate, provides for the minimum requirement demanded by the seamen; and it should under no circumstances be surrendered. It does not require the employment of a great crew of idle seamen, as the shipowners pretend, but merely a higher grade of men in some branches of the service than are now employed. It will be no hardship to the employers, because, applying to all alike, rates can be advanced a trifle if necessary to cover a living wage for a long abused calling. The LaFollette bill provides safety for the traveling public, and decent conditions for the seamen. It should not require another Titanic disaster to secure its passage through the House.

S. C.



The Jingo's Political Economy.

Criticism of President Wilson's Mexican policy is based on the notion that protection of foreign investments is far more important than all efforts to reduce the tariff, abolish trusts, cut down the cost of living, raise wages, or bother with similar trifles at home.

S. D.



Pennsylvania's Opportunity.

Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania in opening his campaign for re-election, refers to the greatness of his State as a reason why he should be returned. Pennsylvania's greatness has not heretofore been evident in the quality of its United States Senators. That is one particular in which the State has an enormous amount of room to grow. Nothing will show more clearly true greatness in the State than its rejection, at the next election, of Boies Penrose and other servants of the privileged interests which have so long controlled the State.

S. D.



Taxation in the District of Columbia.

A misstatement concerning the American Civic Association was made on page 74 of the Public. The Association was not formerly the League of American Municipalities, as was therein stated. A protest has come from Mr. Horace McFarland, its president, against the criticism of its opposition to Congressman Crisp's bill to put an end to the federal government's policy of bearing half the expense of local administration of the city of Washington. Mr. McFarland dwells largely on the fact that the people of Washington are denied self-government, but comment was made on that in the editorial to which he refers. He does not say whether or not the Association would withdraw